

Application No.: 09/707269

Case No.: 53415US038

REMARKS

Claims 16, 19-39, and 41-43 are pending. Reconsideration of the application in view of the following remarks is requested.

I. Claims 16, 19-28, 31, 36-39, and 41-43 are Novel in view of Small '939

Claims 16, 19-28, 31, 36-39, and 41-43 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Pat. No. 6,546,939 (Small '939). Applicants request reconsideration of this rejection because Applicants' priority date is prior to the filing date of Small '939.

The Office Action asserts that the present application is a continuation-in-part of Applicants' application number 08/846,726. The present application, however, is a continuation of Applicants' application number 09/091,932, which is a continuation-in-part of 08/846,726. The 09/091,932 application was filed on June 24, 1998. The pending claims are fully supported by the 09/091,932 application. Accordingly, the pending claims have a priority date of at least June 24, 1998, which is prior to the November 3, 2000, filing date of Small '939. For at least this reason, the rejection of claims 16, 19-28, 31, 36-39, and 41-43 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by Small '939 should be withdrawn.

II. Claims 29, 30, and 32-35 are Not Obvious in view of Small '939

Claims 29, 30, and 32-35 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being obvious in view of Small '939. Applicants request reconsideration of this rejection because, as discussed above, Applicants' priority date is prior to the filing date of Small '939. For at least this reason, the rejection of claims 29, 30, and 32-35 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being obvious in view of Small '939 should be withdrawn.

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III. Conclusion

In view of the above, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the application is requested. The Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representative with any questions concerning Applicants' application.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date

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